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SUBJECT: TRAVEL WARNING - LEBANON

1. This Travel Warning updates information on security threats and ongoing political violence in Lebanon, and informs U.S. citizens of current safety and security concerns. The Department of State continues to urge that Americans avoid all travel to Lebanon and that American citizens in Lebanon consider carefully the risks of remaining. This supersedes the Travel Warning for Lebanon issued on May 13, 2008.

2. On May 7, 2008, violence broke out in Lebanese capital of Beirut when Hizballah militants blocked the road leading to Rafiq Hariri International Airport. Hizballah fighters then pushed into areas of Lebanon where they had not traditionally been prevalent, resulting in several violent clashes. While the Airport road has since been reopened, it is possible Hizballah militants will use the same tactic in the future.

3. The U.S. is concerned about Hizballah's use of violence to achieve political ends, coupled with its anti-Western and anti-American rhetoric. The threat of terrorist attacks against Western interests in Lebanon is real. In addition to Hizballah, groups such as Al-Qaeda and Jund al-Sham are present in the country and have issued statements calling for attacks against Western interests in the past.

4. Currently the American Embassy urges American citizens not to travel to Lebanon; those already in Lebanon are urged to consider carefully the risks of remaining in Lebanon and review their travel plans now that air travel services have resumed. U.S. citizens who plan to remain in Lebanon despite this warning are advised to maintain adequate supplies of food, water and other essential items and minimize travel outside of their homes.

5. U.S. citizens traveling to Lebanon or resident in

Lebanon should be aware that the U.S. Embassy has limited ability to reach all areas of Lebanon. The Embassy cannot guarantee that Embassy employees can render assistance to U.S. citizens in areas where there is limited government control.

¶6. Landmines and unexploded ordnance continually pose significant dangers throughout southern Lebanon, particularly south of the Litani River, as well as in areas of the country where civil war fighting was intense. More than a dozen civilians have been killed and over 100 injured by unexploded ordnance following the armed conflict in July-August 2006. Travelers should watch for posted landmine warnings and strictly avoid all areas where landmines and unexploded ordnance may be present.

¶7. United States citizens are responsible for arranging commercial or private means of transportation to depart Lebanon. For Americans, individual or small-group travel out of the country remains the safest option. U.S. Government-facilitated evacuations such as took place in 2006 occur only when no safe private alternatives exist. Evacuation would be provided on a cost-recovery basis, which means the traveler must reimburse the U.S. government for the cost of the travel. The lack of valid travel documents (U.S. passport or U.S. visa, as appropriate) will slow the U.S. Embassy's ability to provide assistance. Further information on the department's role during emergencies is provided at http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1212.html.

¶8. The Department of State considers the threat to U.S. government personnel in Beirut sufficiently serious to

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require them to live and work under strict security restrictions. These practices limit, and may occasionally prevent, access by U.S. Embassy officials to certain areas of the country. Unofficial travel to Lebanon by U.S. government employees and their family members requires prior approval by the Department of State.

¶9. The Embassy is located in Awkar, near Antelias, Beirut, Lebanon. Public access hours for American citizens are Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.; however, American citizens who require emergency services outside of these hours may contact the embassy by telephone at any time. The telephone numbers are (961-4) 542-600, 543-600, and fax 544-209.

¶10. American citizens may register with the embassy online by visiting <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>. Americans are strongly encouraged to update their registration information if it is no longer current. Information on consular services and registration can also be found at <http://lebanon.usembassy.gov> or by phone at the above telephone numbers between 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday local time.

¶11. Updated information on travel and security in Lebanon may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 within the United States and Canada or, from overseas, 1-202-501-4444. Additional details can be found in the Department of State's Country Specific Information for Lebanon, and the Worldwide Caution, which are available on the Department's Internet website at <http://travel.state.gov>.

¶12. Minimize considered.
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